

Treason and Murther: <sup>3</sup>  
Or, The  
Bloody Father-in-Law.

Being a True and Perfect Relation of a Horrible

MURDER,

Committed at HAM, neer Stratford in Essex,  
on the Wife of *James Alsop*, by her Husbands  
Father and Brother, one of which most in-  
humanely Cut her Throat, as she lay fast  
asleep in her Bed, she being then with Child.  
Together with the manner how they were se-  
verally taken, and discovered also to be  
Clippers of Money, their Commitment to  
*Chelmsford* Goal, and their Tryals at the  
Assizes, *March 25. 1674.*

Where *James Alsop* the Husband of the Woman murdered, and his  
Mother were also tryed upon Suspicion, and cleared, but the said  
*James Alsop* the father was found guilty of both Endements, and  
*William Alsop* (going formerly by the Name of *William Toppham*)  
pleaded Guilty to the same.

Whereupon they were both Condemned, the Father to be Hanged at Stratford,  
the other at the Common place of Execution.



THE  
B L O O D Y  
Father-in-Lawv , &c.

**T**hough Custom hath made a little preamble all most necessary to these small Narratives, so to prepossess the Reader with the horreur or novelty of what is to be related, that his Curiosity may be engaged to think it worthy a perusal, yet may we justly be excused from that troublesome impertinence, since what we are here to recount is in it self so prodigiously Criminal and Barbarous, that to go about with words and flourishies to agravate the guilt were to allay the Fact which in it self is impious beyond expression.

At *Ham*, a small Villiage about 4 miles from *London*, but situated in the County of *Essex*, there dwelt one *Alsop*, by Trade a *Felmonger*, whose Son *James Alsop* sometimes since married with a Widow of good credit and competent Estate, vvith 3 Children, one was a Girl, now about nine or ten years of Age: they lived together vvith their father and mother for some time seemingly very



Joring and comfortably) but (some little differences) rarely, or never wholly kept from the most Amorous Marriage-Bed (afterwards arising; the Devil always busie to foment mischief, being naturally an enemy to Love and Peace, is ready to blow those sparks of dissention into a flame of malice, not to be quenched but with blood.

Nor can we exactly set forth the particular occasions that moved their spleen against this Innocent womans Life, any further than from, common same grounded on circumstances afterwards discoverd, which speaks it thus, that the father being a clipper of money, could neither carry the business so privately and cleverly; but the young woman had some Notice of it; nor induce her to joyn Cordially therein, but that she would be perpetually representing to the grand hazard and danger of such treasonable practises, and would be often (especially upon any pet taken or small falling out) upbraiding the same: hereupon 'tis believed the plot was first laid to give her a remove out of the World, Remembring that cursed Maxim in the School of Villany.

*Scelera Sceleribus Tuenda.*

Or as our incomparble Ben puts it into the Mouth of Cataline:

*The ills I have done cannot be safe without committing greater.*

Satan, no doubt was ready to inspire the Old man with such suggestions as these; *Will you suffer your life to lye at the pleasure of another? must you not be always a slave to her? or else she can sacrifice you when she lists, and that legally, to her Revenge; is it not a most wretched life that is held by no other tenure, but the Courtship, and depends upon no better security than a womans silence, whose natural vanity is such, that if malice should not discover it, yet the humour of tattling and Gossiping,*

proper to her Sex, will not let her conceal it, but will quickly blab it abroad; consult then your own safety by her ruine, put her into a condition past telling of Tales; remember self-preservation is the first Arcicle in Natures Charter: For the danger, it is nothing, I'll teach thee a thousand ways to dispatch her, so far beyond the purblind sights of the Law which requires Eye-witnesses, that the most Eagle-ey'd suspicions shall not reach thee, &c.

The poor graceless man inclining too much to these hellish suggestions, without fear of God or regard to his own soul, resolves at last upon the bloody business, but still was Irresolute in what manner to accomplish it.

Some small time afore her murther was really acted, her husband would have her ride abroad with him, which she condescended to, but as they were coming home in the evening, a Gentleman meeting them, drew his sword, but passing the husband turned back, and run at the woman, when as providence ordered it, passengers were heard comming on at a small distance at the same Instant; which obliged this unknown Assafinate to ride away with what speed he could, having done the woman no dangerous hurts, besides frightening her, and two small pricks with the point of his Rapier, the one on her arm, and the other on her Breast.

A day or two after his Father had her abroad, and when they came home at Night, he sent for some strong drink, but the Woman was afraid to drink, alledging for an excuse that her Head aaked exceedingly, and that Night told her Daughter, who lay with her, that she was afraid her Father-in-Law would poison her.

Hitherto providence had over-ruled the black designs, but now 'tis resolved to accomplish the hellish murther. In order whereunto 'tis very industriously reported up  
and

and down amongst the Neighbours, that the Woman was to go the next morning into *Yorkshire* to visit some friends, and that she would continue there a quarter of a Year, this was raised to prevent Peoples enquiry what was become of her when she should be found missing, having concluded that very Night to Ship her for Eternity, although 'twas known she was with Child.

Accordingly her Husband being gone a Journey not to return that Night, and she innocently sleeping in her Bed with her fore-mentioned Daughter: Behold! a little after Midnight comes in a person with a black Gown on, and a Vizard on his Face, with a Candle in one hand, and a naked Knife in the other. The Girl happened to be awake, and being extremely frightened, crept over Head and ears in the Bed: but the bloody murderer runs up to the Bedside, and setting down his Candle, takes the Woman as she lay harmlessly sleeping, and most barbarously and violently cut her Throat from the one Ear to the other, which so suddenly dispatched her that she never spoke one word, but after a little struggling expired. Having thus acted the bloody Tragedy, their next business is to conceal it.

For though in readiness a Grave had been dug in the Orchard to put her in, thinking that by giving out that she went away on her Journey very early, all might be hush'd up without notice or suspicion, yet now a new difficulty arises, for he knew not how to get her out of the Bed, but the Girl will discover it. And here we may admire and bless over-ruling providence that preserved such Inhumane hands from murdering her too, but the Lord would not suffer them to proceed in their villany.

But he resolves upon another trick, and takes down a whole panel of glass out of a window neer where the woman

man lay (being a low Room) to make it seem as if they had been robbed, and that the Murther had been done by Thieves; Their men lay up in another part of the house that used to be bolted in, and old *Alsep* having so taken down the Glass, begins to set up a mighty Exclamation of Thieves, Thieves, and with much seeming hast and earnestness calls upon his men to rise, who answered that they could not get out, whereupon he unbolted the door, and said they were rob'd, and some of them going into the Womans Room, found her all bloody. At which he seemed to be mightily sorry and amazed, and would needs run for a Surgeon, whom he told that he was rob'd, and that he had lost twenty Guineys, and that he feared his Daughter in Law was murdered by the thieves.

In the mean time the Neighbours are Alarm'd, and the poor Girl comes running into the street all bloody with her Mothers blood, but knew not that she was kill'd, for though she found her self wet in the Bed, yet by reason of her fright she knew not that it was with blood, nor durst look up till people came about her.

She told the people that she saw a man come in at the door in a black Indian Gown, and a Vizard on his face; much about the tallness of her Grand-father, whereupon, and upon some other words that the Woman had said a day or two before to some Neighbours, it was thought fit to take him into Custody.

The rather, for that Providence willing so bloody a Deed should not go undiscovered, had ordered the matter so, as to blast his politick Lye of Thieves coming in at the Window, for looking up to it, they saw that it was taken down indeed on the outside, but within all before the place, was a large sheet of Cobweb, vvhole, and not broken in the least, whence it appeared evidently no creature could have come n there.

Besides,



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Besides, he offered the Constable Ten Pounds to  
suffer him to escape, but he honestly replied, he would  
not be Bribed in such a case for a World. His house being  
searched, they found in a Trunck a Vizard-mask, as the Girl  
had described, with the mark of a Bloody Thumb upon  
it, which he had made when he took it off his face, after  
he had committed this Execrable Murther: They also  
found several pair of Shears, wherewith to Clip Money:  
and Clipings of Money in several places: Nor was that (as  
is supposed) all his Trade. For searching the House, they  
found in a great heap of Wool, a very rich Suit of a Gentle-  
mans: Which being asked where he had it, he said he  
Bought it in *Long-Lane*: But 'tis presumed used the High-  
Pad, or Robing on the Road, as well as Clipping.

The Officers demanding of the Old Woman, where the  
Young VVomans cloaths were, she said she had sent them  
before into *Torkshire*; but they searcht her Trunck, and  
found all her cloaths there.

Hereupon the Old Man and VVoman were committed;  
and the Son, her Husband, being then, (as was since pro-  
ved) at *Colchester*, soon after returning, was  
bound over, upon Suspition, to the Assizes. During the  
time the Old man lay thus in Prison, a Notable Stratagem  
is set on foot (as 'tis supposed) to clear him of the Fact:  
for a report was raised that some High-way-men had  
confessed they robbed the house, and killed the VVoman,  
and after much stir, a Portmantle and Letter upon search  
of a House was found in *London*: The Letter spake much  
to that purpose, and that the Person was hastening away  
for *Holland*. In the Portmantle vvas a bloody shirt, a strange  
(not Vizard-Mask) but) great frightful Vizard: several  
Clipings and Fileings of Silver, &c. The Person that owns  
this Portmantle vvas not to be found: but *William*

*Toppam*, being very much concerned in the business, and solicitous; he began to be suspected to be some way concerned in the Guilt, and thereupon being Apprehended, after some time he was discovered to be Old *Alfop's* own Son, and thereupon was likewise Comitted.

At the Assizes holden for the County of *Essex*, at the Town of *Chelmsford*, March 23. 167<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>. *Alfop* the Father being Indicted both for Clipping of Money, and Murthering his Daughter in Law, was brought in Guilty by the Jury; his Wife and his Son *James*, upon a long debate of the matter, were acquitted, but his Son *William Alfop* alias *Toppam*, being Indicted in the same manner as his Father was, of his own accord pleaded guilty to both Indictments, and afterwards begged for Transportation; which being denied, he there alledged that he Pleadet guilty, only to take off the Crime from his Father, &c.

But it was then too late, whereupon both his Father and he Received Sentence of Death.

The First to be Hanged in Chains at *Stratford*, neer the Place where the Villany was Acted; the last at *Chelmsford*, at the Common place of Execution.

F. I. N. I. S.





